



MEETING SUMMARY
Edina Planning Commission
Wednesday, January 30, 2008
Edina City Hall Council Chambers
4801 West 50th Street

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair, John Lonsbury, Julie Risser, Nancy Scherer, Kevin Staunton, Michael Schroeder, Mike Fischer, Steve Brown, Floyd Grabel, and Arlene Forrest

STAFF PRESENT:

Cary Teague, Heather Worthington and Jackie Hoogenakker

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTE SUMMARY:

The minutes of the December 19, 2007, meeting were filed as submitted.

II. NEW BUSINESS:

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Planner Teague informed the Commission that at this time the Commission needs to elect a chair and vice chair.

Chair Lonsbury explained the Commission needs to elect a chair to serve until a new Planning Commission is seated in 2009. Chair Lonsbury asked for nominations for Chair.

Commissioner Brown moved to nominate John Lonsbury to serve as Chair of the Planning Commission until 2009. Commissioner Fischer seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried nominating John Lonsbury as Chair.

Chair Lonsbury asked if there were further nominations for chair, being none, Chair Lonsbury asked for a motion to close the nominations.

Commissioner Grabiell moved to close nominations for chair. Commissioner Staunton seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Chair Lonsbury stated since one name has been nominated to serve as chair there can be a vote by acclamation to elect the chair.

Chair Lonsbury stated all in favor of John Lonsbury serving as Chair signify by saying aye. Ayes, Risser, Scherer, Staunton, Schroeder, Fischer, Brown, Grabiell, Forrest, Sierks. Motion carried.

Chair Lonsbury thanked Commissioners for their vote of confidence and support.

Chair Lonsbury asked Commissioners for nomination(s) for Vice-Chair.

Commissioner Brown moved to nominate Michael Fischer as Vice-Chair. Commissioner Schroeder seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried nominating Michael Fischer as Vice-Chair.

Chair Lonsbury asked if there were other nominations for Vice-Chair. Being none Chair Lonsbury asked for a motion to close the nominations.

Commissioner Scherer moved to close the nominations for Vice-Chair. Commissioner Risser seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion to close nominations carried.

Chair Lonsbury stated there being only one name placed in nomination the Commission can vote to elect the Vice Chair by acclamation. All those in favor of Michael Fischer as Vice- Chair signify by saying aye. Ayes; Risser, Scherer, Staunton, Schroeder, Brown, Grabiell, Forrest, Sierks, Lonsbury. Motion carried for Michael Fischer to serve as Vice-Chair until 2009.

Commissioner Fischer thanked the Commission for their support.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

PUBLIC HEARING / UPDATE OF THE 2008 CITY OF EDINA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Presentation from Chair Lonsbury:

Chair Lonsbury addressed the Commission and explained at this time he will be doing a brief presentation and overview of the differences between this Plan and the previous 1998 Plan and highlighting key points.

Chair Lonsbury stated it is important to understand that the Comprehensive Plan is a plan for the future; it's a framework plan, a broad plan, and a general plan that helps to shape the vision of Edina.

Chair Lonsbury gave his presentation.

Chair Lonsbury opened the hearing for public testimony.

Public Comment:

Virginia Borgeson, 6216 Ewing Avenue, expressed displeasure with "Monster Houses", the City's notification process and Council actions.

Doug Mayo, 5004 Kellogg Avenue, asked the Commission to increase the goals for affordable housing.

Virgil Dismeyer, 7250 Lewis Ridge, expressed interest in the concept of "Cahill Gardens" adding he believes a compatible plan can be developed for this area with high-rises kept along the major freeways.

Joseph Talghader, 7504 Hyde Park Drive, told the Commission there's a lot of "stories out there" about what could/would happen in the Cahill area and suggested that the City send out flyers when a change is proposed for a specific area.

Sharon Ming, 1103 Coventry Place, told the Commission she's a proponent of affordable housing and believes action needs to be taken to ensure that the affordable housing goals laid out in the Housing Succession Plan are met and if possible exceeded.

Robert Gubrud, 4421 Ellsworth Drive, told the Commission they should consider the impact of peak oil and suggested that the Council should create a peak oil task force.

A resident of 6566 France Avenue told the Commission the City needs to pay attention to maintaining and expanding affordable housing opportunities, adding Edina schools need young children. Edina should be a place where teachers, police, fire fighters, etc. are able to live.

Donald Dietz, 6405 Rolf Avenue, expressed displeasure that the City hasn't done anything to stop the continued building trend of "Monster Houses". Neighborhoods need to be protected, and Edina's affordable housing stock needs to be maintained.

Kimberly Montgomery, 5300 Evanswood Lane, told the Commission Edina needs a Community Center where not only seniors, but children and teens can go to participate in activities. Ms. Montgomery suggested that the City consider redeveloping the public works site with a Community Center. Ms. Montgomery added in her opinion the current public works site would be underutilized if another office building were constructed there. Ms. Montgomery also suggested that tree preservation language be placed in the Comprehensive Plan.

John Bohan, 800 Coventry Place, questioned where "bonus" height has been implemented, and how it works. Mr. Bohan referred to the small area plans mentioned in the Plan and questioned who would initiate those area plans.

Pat Downey, 7501 Hyde Park Drive, asked to have his voice added in support of affordable housing, adding the goal of 212 housing units is too low, increase the goal.

Cassandra McHoltick, Lewis Ridge neighborhood association said her concern is with the small area plans especially in the Cahill area. Ms. McHoltick said retaining what exists, even warehouse district areas instead of high density housing, could be better. Increase in density is an increase in traffic. Ms. McHoltick suggested if the Cahill area plan is ever implemented high-rises should be limited along Highways 100 and 494. Ms. McHoltick pointed out Edina is mostly residential. Concluding, Ms. McHoltick said she wants suburban setback requirements maintained and the Cahill area should remain a small retail neighborhood node.

John Knutson, 5215 Benton Avenue, stated he supports affordable housing and suggested that some form of development fee similar to parkland dedication (used to build and maintain parks) be formulated to advance affordable housing in Edina. Mr. Knutson said there are many seniors in Edina who want to downsize and they need affordable housing options. Police Officers, teachers, nurses also need affordable housing options.

**Commissioner Grabiell moved to close the public hearing.
Commissioner Fischer seconded the motion.**

COMMISSION COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

Chair Lonsbury stated that at this time he would like the Commission to discuss and comment on any issues/topics they have or those raised by residents.

A lengthy discussion ensued with the following issues raised:

- Set realistic affordable housing goals. Recommend an increase in affordable housing units.
- The Housing Succession Plan goal of 500 affordable housing units may be a number that could be added to the Comprehensive Plan as achievable, noting the Housing Succession Plan was received by the City, but not adopted. Historically, Edina has proven it is important to achieve its goals, and having a “mandatory” number may “get it done”.
- Clarify density bonuses with the suggestion that “bonus” becomes “incentives”.
- The Comprehensive Plan should articulate why “affordable housing” matters and list those reasons
- Assign responsibility for implementation of affordable housing goals.
- Acknowledge affordable housing is a controversial issue and residents may have mixed feelings on the issue. Recognize challenges.
- Increase affordable housing opportunities for all people, single, families, and seniors. Also include options in the plan to achieve affordable housing (Land Trusts, East Edina Housing) by reaching out to the business community.
- Define inclusionary zoning, lifecycle housing, overlay districts and/or zones
- Clearly define what is meant by the term “Step Down”.
- Clarify small area plans and district guidelines noting there isn’t anything in the Plan that states an area will be redeveloped. The Comp Plan is a guide plan and these small commercial nodes are owned by private individuals. Redevelopment may never occur.
- Clarify who can request initiation of small area plans (community, property owners, business groups, City staff, Planning Commission, Council, etc)
- Further clarify FAR and how zoning bonuses (incentives) work. Somehow articulate in the Plan that for the majority of Edina density will not be increased. Things will remain as is. It’s only in those identified areas of possible change where the density bonuses/incentives will be able to be used to increase density.
- Consider developing a PUD District (Planned Unit Development), acknowledging this would mean a change to the Zoning Ordinance; however, it is something the Planning Commission needs to consider.
- Place in the Plan provisions for urban forest protection. Create a tree ordinance.

- Clarify or have a definition for the term “Aging Population”. It’s a phrase used throughout the Comp Plan and it needs to be defined.
- Acknowledge continued support for an increase in bike and walking paths.
- Comment on massing and note recent changes to code.

Chair Lonsbury in summary listed the following as items also for consideration:

- Review the City’s notification process.
- Consider developing a “community center” so there is a location for intergenerational activities.
- Acknowledge that peak oil is a concern for not only Edina but the entire country noting the City has established an Energy and Environmental Commission that should tackle this issue and other environmental and energy issues.

Chair Lonsbury directed staff to formulate these comments and definitions into the Plan and bring them back to the Commission for further review at the February 27, 2008 Planning Commission meeting.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS:

A-08-1 Sprint Spectrum and Adath Cemetery 5605 France Avenue, Edina, MN

Staff Presentation

Planner Teague informed the Commission Sprint Spectrum would like to build a 70-foot tall cellular antenna tower at the Adath Cemetery at 5606 France Avenue. Edina’s existing ordinances do not allow cellular antennas or towers within cemeteries. The applicant is therefore, requesting an ordinance amendment to allow cell towers within cemeteries.

Planner Teague asked the Commission to note the City’s current ordinance allows cellular antenna towers within the R-1 zoning district on properties that are conditionally permitted uses, publicly owned, or golf courses. The Adath Cemetery is zoned R-1, however cemeteries are not regulated.

Planner Teague explained in most cities, cemeteries are conditionally permitted uses within single-family districts. However, the Edina zoning ordinance does not mention cemeteries at all; therefore, the City’s two

cemeteries are considered legal existing non-conforming uses. The second cemetery is the Grand View Park Cemetery on Maloney Avenue.

Concluding Planner Teague stated staff believes that it's reasonable to allow cellular antennas/towers within cemeteries for the following three reasons:

1. A Cemetery has a similar lot size, and could be considered a similar use as lots and uses that currently allow cellular antenna/towers within the R-1 Zoning District. Within the R-1 District, antenna towers are a permitted use on the following properties:
 - religious institution properties including churches, synagogues, chapels and temples;
 - school property;
 - public parks and publicly owned property;
 - libraries;
 - golf courses;
 - day care facilities; and
 - pre-schools and nursery schools.

2. Cemeteries would provide sites that are large enough to allow for required setbacks from residentially zoned property. The city code requires cell towers that are 75 feet tall or less to be setback four times the height of a tower from the buildable area on residential property. Towers that are taller than 75 feet must be setback six times the height of the tower.

The proposed cell tower at the Adath Cemetery would be 70 feet tall, therefore, would require a 280-foot setback from the buildable area of residential property. The closest home would setback 425 feet. A similar sized tower could also be located on the south half of the city's other cemetery, which is the Grandview Park Cemetery.

3. The current code regulation, which does not allow cell towers within cemeteries, was likely an oversight. The current ordinance specifically allows cell towers in the R-1 district on properties that are developed with conditional uses, public property and golf courses. This is standard language that is typically used in most city regulations. Cemeteries are typically conditionally permitted uses; however in Edina they are not regulated.
4. The proposed ordinance would allow regulation of cell towers and antennas within cemeteries similar to other Twin Cities communities. Staff conducted a survey of cities and found that with the exception of Hopkins, Edina is the only city that does not regulate cemeteries. As demonstrated, cemeteries are typically a conditionally permitted use and cell towers are typically allowed by a conditional use permit within a cemetery.

APPEARING FOR THE APPLICANT:

Steve Trueman - Sprint

COMMISSION COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS:

Commissioner Scherer asked Planner Teague if residents were informed of the request. Planner Teague responded residents were not informed, adding the request is for an ordinance amendment. Technically ordinance amendments don't fall under the jurisdiction of the Commission; however it does fall within the Land Use regulations so a decision was made to have the Commission comment on the requested amendment.

Commissioner Staunton asked Mr. Teague if these type of towers could be banned or does the City merely regulate them. Planner Teague responded they can't be banned but they can be regulated.

Chair Lonsbury informed the Commission he served on the Planning Commission when the issue of satellite dishes and antenna towers first appeared on the scene, adding if memory serves him correctly a moratorium was set to afford staff time to formulate regulations. Continuing, Chair Lonsbury said regulations were developed for the City's different zoning districts, adding he believes it was only an oversight that cemeteries weren't included as Conditional Uses in the R-1 zoning district.

Commissioner Risser commented that whether we like it or not cellular towers are a fact, adding they are even permitted in National Parks.

PRESENTATION BY APPLICANT:

Mr. Trueman addressed the Commission and explained he has been working with Heather Worthington, Assistant City Manager on trying to locate a cellular tower in the area. Mr. Trueman said there are certain pockets in the area that experience "dropped calls". Continuing, Mr. Trueman explained their initial focus was nearby parks but after careful review it was believed that this site works best. Mr. Trueman pointed out the tower is stealth, adding even in the fall and winter months it is difficult to see. Concluding, Mr. Trueman told the Commission he was surprised this request needed to be heard by the Commission and Council, adding when he applied for the permit he was told cemeteries are not addressed in City Code and an ordinance amendment would be needed to erect the antenna tower in a cemetery.

COMMISSION ACTION:

Commissioner Fischer moved to recommend approval of the amendment as written requesting that residents be notified of the request before the Council hearing. Commissioner Grabel seconded the motion.

Chair Lonsbury offered an amendment that would exclude notifying residents of the code change. Chair Lonsbury stated if he understands the process correctly the request is for an amendment to code which would add cemeteries as Conditional Uses within the R-1 zoning district. Antennas/towers are permitted in those districts. Chair Lonsbury stated an ordinance change is not site specific, pointing out Edina has two cemeteries. Concluding, Chair Lonsbury said the City Council may direct notification but at this time that isn't something the Commission should do.

Commissioner Fischer and Commissioner Grabel accepted the amendment.

Chair Lonsbury called the vote. Ayes; Risser, Scherer, Staunton, Schroeder, Fischer, Brown Grabel, Forrest, Lonsbury. Motion carried.

V. INTERGOVERNMENTAL BUSINESS:

Chair Lonsbury acknowledged the back of the packet materials.

VI. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT/ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 PM

Submitted by